

Message Text

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R 132019Z AUG 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

UNCLAS STATE 201842

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM, UR

SUBJECT: PNE/TTB

FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING,
AUGUST 11:

Q: DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE FROM THE SOVIET UNION
ANY MESSAGE SIMILAR TO OR DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE THAT WAS
MADE PUBLIC TO PART OF THE PRESS BY THE SOVIET EMBASSY HERE
YESTERDAY?

A: MURREY, THE SOVIETS COMMUNICATED WITH US OFFICIALLY,
ESSENTIALLY ALONG THE SAME LINES AS THE MESSAGE WHICH THEY
DISTRIBUTED TO THE MEDIA YESTERDAY AFTERNOON.

Q: WHEN DID THEY DO THAT?

A: THEY DID IT BEFORE DISTRIBUTION TO THE MEDIA.

Q: YESTERDAY?

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A: YES.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO THAT MESSAGE?

A: REACTION IN WHAT SENSE?

Q: WELL, IN ITS ESSENCE THEY SAY THAT THEY ARE MAINTAINING THE IMPLICIT AGREEMENT OF THE THRESHOLD TEST BAN, AND THAT THOSE BLASTS WERE NOT ABOVE THE THRESHOLD. DO YOUR DOUBTS STILL PERSIST?

A: WE NOTE THAT ALTHOUGH THE STATEMENT DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY SAY THAT THE TWO SHOTS WERE NOT ABOVE THE 150 KT THRESHOLD, IT DOES REPEAT THE SOVIET STATEMENT OF APRIL 2 THAT THEY--QUOTE--DO NOT INTEND TO TAKE ANY ACTIONS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY.

Q: HAS THE DEPARTMENT ALSO NOTED THE LOOPHOLE IN THAT STATEMENT THAT BY COMPLYING WITH THE TREATY, THEY COULD HAVE GONE UP TO ONE AND A HALF MEGS, AS LONG AS THE TIME PHASE ON THE INDIVIDUAL BLASTS, WHICH WERE 150 KT OR LESS, WAS OBSERVED?

IN OTHER WORDS, THE DEPARTMENT COULD HAVE OBSERVED AN EXPLOSION LARGER THAN 150 KILOTONS, AND THAT COULD HAVE BEEN WITHIN THE TERMS OF THE TREATY AS LONG AS IT IS A PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSION.

A: I THINK YOU ARE GETTING INTO A TECHNICAL INTERPRETATION THAT I CANNOT ADDRESS, PETER.

THIS IS A GENERAL ANSWER TO HOW THE SOVIET COMMUNICATION TO US HAS BEEN RECEIVED.

Q: I WOULD LIKE TO PURSUE THAT AND ASK, WHAT IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION TO THIS NOTE?

A: WE READ IT AS A STATEMENT BY THE SOVIETS TO THE EFFECT THAT NEITHER OF THEIR TWO RECENT SHOTS EXCEEDED 150 KT. THAT IS THE WAY WE READ IT. THAT IS THE WAY IT IS STATED. IT WAS COMMUNICATED TO US OFFICIALLY AND WE TAKE IT AS UNCLASSIFIED

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SUCH.

Q: DOES THAT END THE MATTER THERE?

A: I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, WHETHER IT ENDS THE MATTER OR NOT. OBVIOUSLY, THIS IS A SUBJECT OF CONTINUING INTEREST AS THE SENATE CONSIDERS THE TWO TREATIES, AND AS WE CONTINUE IN THE PROCESS OF TRYING TO ARRIVE AT EFFEC-

TIVE LIMITATIONS ON NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS.

Q: DID THEY SEND ALONG ANY TECHNICAL DATA? DID THEY TELL YOU HOW BIG THE EXPLOSIONS WERE?

A: IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE TEXT WHICH WAS COMMUNICATED TO THE MEDIA IS BASICALLY WHAT WAS COMMUNICATED TO US.

SO, IN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION AS I AM GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND, THERE WAS NO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION COMMUNICATED.

Q: IN OTHER WORDS, YOUR INTELLIGENCE EVALUATION IS STILL CONTINUING.

A: THAT IS CORRECT, YES, AND THAT IS GOING TO TAKE SEVERAL WEEKS, AS I STATED IN PREVIOUS BRIEFINGS.

Q: WHAT DID THEY PROMISE ON APRIL 2ND?

A. I DO NOT HAVE THE TEXT OF THAT HERE, BUT IT WAS ANNOUNCED AT APPROXIMATELY THE SAME TIME AS OUR ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE SAME EFFECT, NAMELY, THAT THEY DID NOT INTEND TO TAKE ANY ACTIONS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY--AND YOU CAN PUT IN BRACKETS THERE DURING THE PERIOD THAT IT WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION PRIOR TO RATIFICATION, IT BEING UNDERSTOOD THAT THE UNITED STATES, ON ITS PART, WILL ACT LIKEWISE.

NOW, WE MADE A SIMILAR STATEMENT, I BELIEVE IT WAS ON MARCH 31ST, TO THIS SAME EFFECT.

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Q: FRED, THE SOVIET STATEMENT DEALT WITH THE WEAPONS TREATY. WHAT ABOUT THE PNE PART OF THAT? IN OTHER WORDS, IS THERE AS WELL A JOINT SOVIET-AMERICAN COMMITMENT NOT TO EXCEED 150 ON PNE, OR DOES THAT NOT EXIST?

A: THE TREATIES EXIST WITH REGARD TO PNE. YOU ARE AWARE OF THAT, AND I DO NOT THINK I REALLY CAN ADD MUCH TO THAT, BERNIE. THE TREATIES EXIST WITH REGARD TO PNE.

Q: OBVIOUSLY, BUT THE POINT THEY MADE IN THEIR LETTER WAS THAT THIS AGREEMENT OR UNDERSTANDING DEALT WITH WEAPONS TESTS.

A: THAT IS RIGHT.

Q: THE QUESTION IS, I AM ASKING, IS THERE SUCH AN UNDER-
STANDING ON THE PNE TREATY?

A: YOU MEAN AN UNDERSTANDING WITHIN THE TREATIES NOW
BEING CONSIDERED.

Q: AN UNDERSTANDING COMPARABLE TO THE UNDERSTANDING THAT
YOU BOTH HAVE DISCLOSED IN CONNECTION WITH THE WEAPONS
TESTS, NOT TO GO BEYOND 150.

A: I WOULD HAVE TO TAKE THAT QUESTION.

Q: YOU DON'T KNOW THAT THAT IS THE CASE RIGHT NOW?

A. I DO NOT.

Q: DOES THE UNITED STATES CONSTRUE THE SOVIET REPLY AS
MEANING THAT THE TWO TESTS DETECTED BY THE UNITED STATES
WERE WEAPONS TESTS?

A: I CANNOT SAY THAT WE CONSTRUE IT THAT WAY, MURREY. I
DO NOT KNOW.

Q: WHEN WAS THE PNE SUBMITTED TO THE SENATE FOR RATIFICA-
TION?

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A: I THINK IT SENT FROM THE WHITE HOUSE TO THE SENATE
ON THE -- 29TH OF JULY, YES.

Q: IT IS POSSIBLE, THEN, THAT THOSE TWO EXPLOSIONS TOOK
PLACE IN THE TIME PERIOD WHEN THE TREATY WAS NOT UNDER
CONSIDERATION? THEY SAID THEY INTENDED TO TAKE NO ACTION
WHEN THE TREATY WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION. SINCE IT WAS
SITTING IN THE WHITE HOUSE AND NOT SUBMITTED TO THE SENATE
FOR CONSIDERATION, IT IS POSSIBLE --?

A: I WOULD NOT CARE TO GET INTO QUIBBLING OVER SOMETHING
LIKE THAT. THE DATES OF THE SHOTS WERE JULY 4 AND JULY 29.
THE TWO TREATIES WERE SUBMITTED TO THE CONGRESS ON JULY
29.

Q: JUST ON THE TIME QUESTION, JULY 29 EXPLOSION WAS TIMED
AT 1 A.M., EDT, SO, TECHNICALLY, IT WAS BEFORE THE OFFI-
CIAL PROCESS OF CONSIDERATION BEGAN.

A: NO. THE CONSIDERATION, AS I UNDERSTAND IT--THE
TREATIES WERE UNDER CONSIDERATION, IF NOT FORMALLY BY
THE UNITED STATES SENATE, THEN BY THE UNITED STATES

GOVERNMENT.

I WILL LOOK INTO THIS PARTICULAR POINT, BUT I WOULD JUDGE AT THE MOMENT THAT THE PROCESS OF CONSIDERATION WAS ALREADY IN PROGRESS. I WILL CONFIRM THAT FOR YOU.

A: WHAT WAS YOUR ANSWER TO MURREY'S QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER YOU TAKE THE SOVIETS TO MEAN THAT BOTH TESTS WERE WEAPONS?

A: I SAID I DID NOT KNOW.

Q: AND YOU SAID YOU WOULD TRY TO FIND OUT.

A: I SAID I WOULD TRY TO FIND OUT.

Q: COULD YOU GIVE US SOME KIND OF ASSURANCE THAT WHEN THE ASSESSMENT OF THE ACTUAL SIZE OF THESE EXPLOSIONS IS COMPLETED, THAT WE WILL FIND OUT WHAT THE SIZE OF THOSE UNCLASSIFIED

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BLASTS WAS?

A: I CANNOT PROMISE TO GET YOU THE ENTIRE REPORT, OBVIOUSLY, SINCE IT NO DOUBT WILL BE CLASSIFIED. I WILL TRY TO GET AS MUCH INFORMATION ON THE TECHNICAL EVALUATION OF THOSE TESTS AS WE CAN MAKE AVAILABLE.

Q: WELL, PARTICULARLY ON THE POINT WHETHER IT DID OR DID NOT EXCEED 150 KT IN THE FINAL ASSESSMENT.

A: I WILL TRY TO GET AS COMPLETE AND AS CLEAR A READ-OUT ON THAT, BUT THAT OF COURSE IF NOT ENTIRELY OUR PREROGATIVE TO PROVIDE. IT IS A QUESTION OF ERDA AND OTHER AGENCIES LOOKING AT THE DATA AND MAKING EVALUATIONS. SO, I WILL CERTAINLY GET FOR YOU WHAT IS POSSIBLE.

Q: BACK TO THE SOVIET NOTE HERE.

A: YES, MURREY.

Q: WHEN YOU SAY IT IS ESSENTIALLY ALONG THE SAME LINES AS THE NOTE DELIVERED TO THE MEDIA. THE NOTE DELIVERED TO THE MEDIA WAS BASED ON DENIAL OF A NEWSPAPER COLUMN BY EVANS AND NOVAK. DID THE SAME THING APPLY TO THE MESSAGE DELIVERED BY THE SOVIET UNION TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT?

A: MURREY, I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE WORDING OF THE COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS THE ONE THAT WAS GIVEN TO YOU. NOW, WHETHER OR NOT IT INCLUDED EVANS AND

NOVAK IN THERE, I DO NOT KNOW, BUT CERTAINLY THAT WAS THE STIMULUS FOR THE --.

Q: WHEN WAS THE NOTE ACTUALLY RECEIVED AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT?

A: IT WAS RECEIVED YESTERDAY BEFORE IT WAS PUBLICLY DISSEMINATED TO THE MEDIA. I DO NOT HAVE A TIME ON IT.

Q: THE REASON I ASKED THE QUESTION IS BECAUSE YOU SAID HERE THAT THE UNITED STATES OFFICIALLY MADE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, AND THAT IS WHY I AM UNCLASSIFIED

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ASKING WHETHER THIS NOTE IS IN REPLY TO THOSE OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIONS.

A: IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT IT IS IN REPLY.

Q: IS IN REPLY?

A: THAT IS CORRECT, IS IN REPLY.

Q: WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS THAT COULD EMERGE IF YOUR TESTS SHOW THAT THE BLASTS WERE IN FACT ABOVE 150 AND THE SOVIET NOTE IS DISMISSIBLE?

A: BERNIE, I DON'T THINK I AM IN A POSITION TO SPECULATE ON THAT. I REALLY WOULD NOT WANT TO SPECULATE ON THAT. ROBINSON

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